

REMARKS

Applicant concurrently files herewith a Petition and Fee for a Two-Month Extension of Time.

Entry of this Amendment is believed proper since no new issues are being presented to the Examiner which would require further consideration and/or search. Indeed, the claim amendments above narrow the issues on appeal. Specifically, the claims have been amended to more particularly point out the invention.

Claims 1-4, 8, 11-20, 23-27, and 32-33 are all the claims presently pending in the application. Claims 6-7, 21-22, 28-31, and 34-41 have been canceled. Applicant gratefully acknowledges the Examiner's indication that claims 7-8 and 11 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Allowable claim 7 has been incorporated into claim 1, thereby placing the Application in condition for immediate allowance and thereby mooting the Examiner's prior art rejection.

Claims 1, 8, and 11-12 have been amended in a manner believed fully responsive to all points raised by the Examiner, thereby to pass all of the claims to allowance. No new matter has been added.

It is noted that the claim amendments herein are made only for more particularly pointing out the invention, and not for distinguishing the invention over the prior art, narrowing the claims, or for any statutory requirements of patentability.

Further, it is noted that, notwithstanding any claim amendments made herein, Applicant's intent is to encompass equivalents of all claim elements, even if amended herein or later during prosecution.

FORMAL MATTERS AND CONCLUSION


In view of the foregoing, Applicant submits that claims 1-4, 8, 11-20, 23-27, and 32-33, all the claims presently pending in the application, are patentably distinct over the prior art of record and are in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner find the application to be other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at the local telephone number listed below to discuss any other changes deemed necessary in a telephonic or personal interview.

Serial No.: 09/309,768
Docket No. 134960/98
NEC.123

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The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any deficiencies in fees or to credit any overpayment of fees to Attorney's Deposit Account No. 50-0481.

Respectfully submitted,



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